




Prediction of Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity Based on Thinking Styles and Mindfulness with the Mediating Role of Emotional Attachment in Women

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to examine the structural model predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity based on thinking styles and mindfulness with the mediating role of emotional attachment in women.

Methods and Materials: This applied study employed a descriptive–correlational design using structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of women attending counseling and psychological service centers in Zanjan in 2025. Based on Klein’s recommendation, a sample size of 260 participants was initially selected using convenience sampling, of which 252 valid questionnaires were analyzed after data screening. Data collection instruments included the Attitudes Toward Infidelity Questionnaire (Whatley, 2008), the Thinking Styles Questionnaire–Short Form (Sternberg & Wagner, 1997), the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory–Short Form (2006), and the Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (Hirschfeld et al., 1997). Data were analyzed using LISREL (version 8) with structural equation modeling techniques.

Findings: The proposed model demonstrated an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 178.40$, $df = 88$, $RMSEA = 0.043$, $CFI = 0.921$). Thinking styles had a significant negative direct effect on attitudes toward marital infidelity ($\beta = -0.391$, $p < .01$), and mindfulness also showed a significant negative direct effect ($\beta = -0.412$, $p < .01$). Emotional attachment significantly predicted attitudes toward marital infidelity ($\beta = -0.745$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, thinking styles ($\beta = 0.637$, $p < .01$) and mindfulness ($\beta = 0.586$, $p < .01$) had significant positive effects on emotional attachment. The indirect effects of thinking styles ($\beta = -0.656$) and mindfulness ($\beta = -0.745$) on attitudes toward marital infidelity through emotional attachment were significant, confirming the mediating role of emotional attachment.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that attitudes toward marital infidelity can be effectively predicted through an integrated model involving thinking styles, mindfulness, and emotional attachment, highlighting the importance of cognitive and emotional mechanisms in shaping relational attitudes.

Keywords: Attitudes toward marital infidelity, thinking styles, mindfulness, emotional attachment

1. Introduction

The family, as one of the most fundamental social institutions, plays a crucial role in shaping individual psychological well-being and social stability. In contemporary societies, however, rapid cultural, economic, and technological transformations have altered the structure and function of family systems, leading to increased challenges in maintaining stable marital relationships (Lashkari & Ghaderi, 2026). One of the most critical threats to marital stability is marital infidelity, which has been consistently identified as a major predictor of relationship dissatisfaction, emotional distress, and divorce (Khani, 2023; Thornes & Collard, 2023). Attitudes toward marital infidelity are particularly important because they influence individuals' cognitive justifications, emotional responses, and behavioral tendencies regarding extramarital relationships (Abdollahzadeh, 2010). Therefore, understanding the psychological determinants of such attitudes is essential for both preventive and therapeutic interventions in marital relationships.

Recent research has emphasized that attitudes toward marital infidelity are not formed in isolation but are shaped by a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal factors (Ahmadi Dahmand & Zarei Tupkhaneh, 2022; Rahnama et al., 2023). Among these factors, thinking styles have received increasing attention as a cognitive framework through which individuals interpret relational experiences and make decisions. Thinking styles, conceptualized within Sternberg's theory of mental self-government, reflect preferred ways of processing information and solving problems, encompassing dimensions such as legislative, executive, and judicial styles (Ytterstad & Olaisen, 2023). Empirical evidence suggests that thinking styles influence communication patterns, problem-solving approaches, and responses to interpersonal conflicts (Dennin et al., 2022; Feng & Lee, 2010). For instance, individuals with more flexible and adaptive thinking styles tend to exhibit better relationship functioning, whereas rigid or maladaptive styles are associated with relational dissatisfaction and dysfunctional beliefs (Zaker et al., 2023; Zarifi & Eghbal, 2024). Consequently, thinking styles may play a significant role in shaping individuals' attitudes toward behaviors such as marital infidelity.

In addition to cognitive factors, mindfulness has emerged as a key psychological construct influencing emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning. Mindfulness,

defined as a nonjudgmental awareness of present-moment experiences, has been widely associated with improved emotional clarity, reduced impulsivity, and enhanced relationship satisfaction (Channawar, 2023; Simione & Saldarini, 2023). Theoretical perspectives such as the monitor and acceptance theory suggest that mindfulness facilitates adaptive responses by increasing awareness while reducing automatic reactivity (Simione & Saldarini, 2023). Empirical studies have demonstrated that mindfulness is positively associated with constructive conflict resolution and relationship quality, while negatively associated with maladaptive behaviors and emotional dysregulation (Hedayati Zafarghandi et al., 2021; Mandal & Lip, 2022). Furthermore, mindfulness has been linked to stress regulation processes, particularly in women, through mechanisms described in the tend-and-befriend theory, which emphasizes relational coping strategies (Cohen & Lansing, 2022). Given these findings, mindfulness may serve as a protective factor against permissive attitudes toward marital infidelity.

Another crucial factor in understanding attitudes toward marital infidelity is emotional attachment. Rooted in attachment theory, emotional attachment reflects individuals' internal working models of relationships, which are shaped by early caregiving experiences and influence later interpersonal functioning (Fonagy et al., 2023; Khadka, 2022). Attachment styles, particularly secure, anxious, and avoidant patterns, have been shown to significantly affect relationship satisfaction, trust, and vulnerability to infidelity (Kaba & Gungor, 2024; Richardson et al., 2023). Individuals with insecure attachment styles are more likely to experience emotional dissatisfaction and seek alternative relational fulfillment, which may increase susceptibility to infidelity (Safir & Ahmadi, 2026). Moreover, emotional attachment has been identified as a key mediator in the relationship between various psychological factors and relational outcomes, including marital stability and satisfaction (Barkhordari & Shahbazi, 2023; Ghasemzadeh et al., 2026).

The mediating role of emotional attachment is particularly relevant when examining the interaction between cognitive and emotional processes. For instance, thinking styles may influence how individuals interpret attachment-related experiences, thereby shaping their emotional responses and relational expectations (Alaybek et al., 2021). Similarly, mindfulness may enhance secure attachment by promoting emotional awareness and reducing defensive reactions, thereby improving interpersonal trust and intimacy (Ghasemzadeh et al., 2026; Soumya &

Sathiyaseelan, 2021). These interconnections highlight the importance of adopting an integrative approach that considers both cognitive and emotional dimensions in understanding attitudes toward marital infidelity.

In recent years, several studies have attempted to model the predictors of marital infidelity and related attitudes using structural approaches. For example, research has shown that emotional maturity, self-compassion, and coping strategies significantly contribute to individuals' tendencies toward infidelity (Khazraloo et al., 2026; Mosharafi et al., 2025). Similarly, studies have demonstrated that emotional maturity and attitudes toward marriage play a significant role in predicting marital instability (Gholami Gharahsheran et al., 2022). These findings suggest that both intrapersonal and interpersonal variables must be considered simultaneously to fully understand the dynamics of marital relationships.

Despite the growing body of literature, there remains a gap in integrative models that simultaneously examine the roles of thinking styles, mindfulness, and emotional attachment in predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity. Most previous studies have focused on isolated predictors or have not adequately explored the mediating mechanisms underlying these relationships. Given the increasing prevalence of marital conflicts and the rising rates of divorce in modern societies, there is a pressing need for comprehensive models that can explain the psychological processes contributing to attitudes toward infidelity (Khani, 2023; Thornes & Collard, 2023). Such models can provide valuable insights for designing effective interventions aimed at promoting marital stability and preventing relational breakdown.

Furthermore, cultural context plays a significant role in shaping attitudes toward marital relationships and infidelity. In societies undergoing rapid social change, traditional norms and values may coexist with emerging individualistic perspectives, leading to increased ambiguity in attitudes toward marital commitment (Lashkari & Ghaderi, 2026). This complexity underscores the importance of conducting context-specific research to better understand how psychological variables interact within particular cultural settings. In this regard, examining women's attitudes toward marital infidelity is particularly important, as women often experience unique social, emotional, and relational dynamics that influence their perspectives and behaviors in intimate relationships (Cohen & Lansing, 2022).

In addition, the integration of cognitive, emotional, and relational constructs aligns with contemporary psychological theories emphasizing the interconnectedness

of mental processes. For example, emotion regulation theory posits that individuals' cognitive appraisals and emotional responses are dynamically linked, influencing behavior and decision-making in interpersonal contexts (Gross, 2015). Similarly, attachment-based and mindfulness-based frameworks highlight the role of awareness and relational schemas in shaping adaptive functioning (Fonagy et al., 2023; Simione & Saldarini, 2023). These theoretical perspectives provide a robust foundation for examining the combined effects of thinking styles, mindfulness, and emotional attachment on attitudes toward marital infidelity.

Overall, the literature suggests that thinking styles, mindfulness, and emotional attachment are significant and interrelated predictors of attitudes toward marital infidelity. However, the mechanisms through which these variables interact remain insufficiently explored, particularly within structural models that can simultaneously examine direct and indirect effects. Addressing this gap is essential for advancing theoretical understanding and informing practical interventions in the field of marital and family psychology.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the structural model of predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity based on thinking styles and mindfulness with the mediating role of emotional attachment in women.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study design and Participant

The present study, considering its objectives, was applied in nature and, in terms of data type, employed a descriptive–correlational design using structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of women attending counseling and psychological service centers in Zanjan in 2025. To estimate the sample size, Klein's (2016) recommendation was used, suggesting that in structural equation modeling, the sample size should preferably exceed 200 participants. He also proposed that the number of samples per research indicator should range between 10 and 20 (minimum 10 and maximum 20). Considering all indicators in the present model (a total of 18 indicators), the initial sample size was calculated as 13 participants per indicator, resulting in 234 participants. Accounting for potential attrition and considering a 10–15% dropout rate, 260 participants were selected as the sample ($n = 260$). Participants were selected through convenience sampling based on inclusion criteria and completed the research questionnaires. Accordingly, five counseling centers were selected conveniently, and questionnaires were distributed

among 260 eligible clients through convenience sampling and informed consent. After data collection, eight incomplete questionnaires were excluded, and data from 252 participants were analyzed.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: age range between 18 and 55 years, attendance at one of the counseling and psychological service centers in Zanjan, having at least one year of marital experience, literacy sufficient to complete the questionnaires, providing informed consent to participate in the study, and no reported diagnosis of severe psychiatric disorders according to records or the center psychologist's report. The exclusion criteria included: incomplete questionnaires (more than 10% missing data), lack of cooperation or withdrawal from the study, undergoing active treatment for severe relational problems in the past three months, and experiencing an acute family crisis at the time of data collection.

2.2. Measures

The Attitudes Toward Marital Infidelity Questionnaire by Whatley (2008) was designed to assess attitudes toward marital infidelity. This questionnaire consists of 12 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (7) to "strongly disagree" (1), with items such as "In marital relationships, infidelity is a cause of divorce." The reverse-scored items are 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 12, which are scored from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (7). This questionnaire was validated in Iran by Abdollahzadeh (2010). In a study by Savari and Talaei Zadeh (2015), its content, face, and criterion validity were found to be satisfactory. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire was reported to be above 0.70.

The short form of the Thinking Styles Questionnaire by Sternberg and Wagner (1997) was used to assess different thinking styles. This questionnaire contains 65 items and is based on Sternberg's theory of mental self-government, which proposes various ways of identifying thinking styles. Sternberg identified 13 thinking styles across five dimensions: functions, forms, levels, scope, and leanings. The 13 thinking styles assessed in this questionnaire include legislative, executive, judicial, global, local, liberal, conservative, hierarchical, monarchic, oligarchic, anarchic, internal, and external styles. The scoring method is based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5), with total scores ranging from 65 to 325. Scores between 1 and 65 indicate a low level of the variable, scores between 65 and 195 indicate a moderate

level, and scores above 195 indicate a high level. Sternberg and Zhang (2005) reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.88 for this questionnaire.

The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory–Short Form (2006) has been widely studied across cultures and evaluated in terms of psychometric properties (Ghasemi Jobaneh et al., 2015). The original version, consisting of 30 items, was developed by Walach et al. (2001), and later a 14-item short form suitable for the general population was introduced by Walach et al. (2006). The long form is more appropriate for individuals familiar with Buddhist culture and meditation practices, whereas the short form is more suitable for populations without such familiarity and can be used across different cultures while adequately covering the domain of mindfulness (Ghasemi et al., 2015; Walach et al., 2006). Responses are given on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "rarely" (1) to "almost always" (4). Item 13 is reverse scored. The minimum and maximum scores are 14 and 56, respectively, with higher scores indicating greater mindfulness. In a study conducted in Iran by Ghasemi Jobaneh et al. (2015), the questionnaire was translated into Persian and its validity and reliability were examined. Reliability coefficients were obtained using Cronbach's alpha, ordinal theta, and test–retest methods. Validity was assessed through concurrent validity and confirmatory factor analysis. For concurrent validity, correlations with the short form of the Tangney Self-Control Scale and the emotional regulation subscale of the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale were reported as 0.69 and 0.68, respectively, at a significance level of 0.01. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated an acceptable model fit and supported a single-factor structure. Reliability coefficients were reported as 0.92 for Cronbach's alpha, 0.93 for ordinal theta, and 0.83 for test–retest reliability over a four-week interval. Overall, the questionnaire demonstrated strong reliability and validity, and its brevity and ease of administration make it suitable for widespread use in research and educational contexts. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.83.

The Interpersonal Dependency Inventory by Hirschfeld et al. (1997) was used to assess emotional attachment (emotional dependency). This questionnaire consists of 48 items and three components: emotional reliance on others, lack of self-confidence, and autonomy assertion. It is scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "completely" (4) to "not at all" (1), with items such as "I prefer to be alone." Subscale scores are calculated by summing the relevant items, and the total score is obtained by summing all items,

with a possible range of 48 to 192. Higher scores indicate greater dependency on others. In a study by Hosseini Ardakani (2020), the questionnaire demonstrated acceptable content, face, and criterion validity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported to be above 0.70, and in the present study, it was 0.80.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using structural equation modeling with LISREL software (version 8).

3. Findings and Results

The examination of demographic characteristics indicated that among the 252 women attending counseling

and psychological service centers in Zanjan in 2025, the largest age group was 31–40 years ($n = 89$, 43.25%), while the smallest group was 41–50 years ($n = 54$, 21.43%). In terms of educational level, the majority held a bachelor's degree ($n = 118$, 46.82%), whereas the smallest proportion had a master's degree or higher ($n = 15$, 5.96%). Regarding duration of marriage, the largest group had been married for 6–10 years ($n = 94$, 37.30%), while the smallest group had been married for more than 20 years ($n = 31$, 12.30%). The descriptive statistics of the research variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Characteristics of All Components of the Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Max	Min	Skewness	Kurtosis
Thinking styles	70.07	3.211	183	38	0.406	0.331
Legislative style	4.46	3.340	20	1	0.710	0.727
Executive style	4.32	2.768	15	1	0.411	0.722
Judicial style	4.58	3.431	17	1	0.609	1.612
Global style	4.21	2.737	15	1	0.403	1.111
Local style	4.28	2.897	16	1	0.524	1.675
Liberal style	4.56	2.558	15	1	0.550	0.398
Conservative style	4.31	2.820	14	1	1.423	0.707
Hierarchical style	4.13	2.663	15	1	1.323	0.272
Monarchic style	4.35	3.104	17	2	0.138	-0.383
Oligarchic style	4.22	3.323	17	1	1.423	0.912
Anarchic style	4.09	2.591	14	1	1.368	1.002
Internal style	4.50	3.303	18	1	1.455	1.789
External style	4.05	2.649	13	1	1.249	1.248
Mindfulness	39.82	4.64	56	33	-0.805	0.561
Emotional attachment – emotional reliance on others	44.88	3.527	68	35	-1.207	1.542
Lack of self-confidence	39.92	3.312	52	33	0.764	0.467
Autonomy confirmation	41.50	2.373	50	28	-1.474	1.406
Marital infidelity	37.44	3.88	48	30	0.312	-1.326

As shown in Table 1, among the thinking styles, the highest mean was related to the judicial thinking style ($M = 4.58$), and the lowest mean was related to the external thinking style ($M = 4.05$). Among the components of emotional attachment, the highest mean corresponded to emotional reliance on others ($M = 44.88$), while the lowest mean corresponded to lack of self-confidence ($M = 39.92$). The mean score for mindfulness was 39.82, and for marital infidelity it was 37.44.

The data in Table 1 also indicate that all variables have skewness and kurtosis values within the range of -2 to $+2$, suggesting a normal distribution.

To evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the structural equation model, several indices were used. One commonly used index is the chi-square (χ^2), which is considered an absolute fit index; the larger its value relative to zero, the poorer the model fit. When the sample size ranges between 75 and 200, the chi-square provides a reasonable measure of fit; however, for larger samples, it is almost always statistically significant (Bollen & Long, 1993; Kenny, 2001, as cited in Hooman, 2005), which often leads to model rejection (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993, as cited in Hooper et al., 2001). Because chi-square is highly sensitive to sample size, researchers often use the relative chi-square (χ^2/df), which minimizes the effect of sample size. A value less than 2

indicates excellent fit, values between 2 and 5 indicate good fit, and values greater than 5 indicate poor fit (Wheaton et al., 1977).

Another important index is the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), which ranges between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 indicating better fit. The Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) is a general fit measure that accounts for degrees of freedom; values of 0.85 or higher indicate acceptable fit, and values close to 0.95 indicate good fit (Verschuren, 1991, as cited in Arshadi, 2009). Incremental fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) compare the proposed model with a baseline model that assumes no covariance among variables (Bentler, 1990, as cited in Arshadi, 2009). Values closer to 1 indicate better fit, and values above 0.90 are considered acceptable (Bentler, 1990; Hu & Bentler, 1995, as cited in Hooman, 2005). The Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), also known as the Non-Normed Fit Index, is used to assess improvement over an independent model (Bentler, 1990, as cited in Arshadi, 2009). Similarly, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) is an incremental fit index used to evaluate model fit, and both indices should exceed 0.90. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) represents the square root of the mean squared residuals and is interpreted as a function of covariance (Hooman, 2005; Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Values above 0.10 indicate poor fit, values between 0.08 and 0.10 indicate mediocre fit, values between 0.05 and 0.08 indicate acceptable fit, and values below 0.05 indicate excellent fit. The model predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity based on

thinking styles and mindfulness with the mediating role of emotional attachment demonstrated adequate fit.

Given that structural equation modeling was used for data analysis, the statistical assumptions of the model were first examined. The assumption of interval-level measurement was met, as all variables were measured at the interval level. The assumption of multivariate normality was assessed by examining skewness and kurtosis values, which ranged from -1.474 to 1.455 for skewness and from -1.326 to 1.789 for kurtosis, indicating acceptable normality. Additionally, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to assess normality, with the null hypothesis stating that the data are normally distributed at a significance level of 0.05. Since the significance levels for most variables were greater than 0.05, the normality assumption was confirmed. The assumption of linearity was examined through regression residuals, indicating no deviation from linearity. The assumption of multicollinearity was assessed through tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) indices; no correlations above 0.80 were observed among exogenous variables, tolerance values were below 0.812, and VIF values were below 2.29, indicating no violation of this assumption. The assumption of homoscedasticity was examined using scatterplots of multivariate regression, confirming equal variances across levels of exogenous variables.

The results of Pearson correlation coefficients among exogenous variables, the mediator, and the endogenous variable are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Thinking styles	1			
2. Mindfulness	0.318**	1		
3. Emotional attachment	0.675**	0.226**	1	
4. Marital infidelity	-0.391**	-0.412**	-0.745**	1

** $p < 0.01$

The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that thinking styles had a significant negative relationship with attitudes toward marital infidelity ($r = -0.391$, $p < .01$). Mindfulness also had a significant negative relationship with attitudes toward marital infidelity ($r = -0.412$, $p < .01$). In addition, emotional attachment had a significant negative relationship with attitudes toward marital infidelity ($r = -0.745$, $p < .01$).

To test the research hypotheses, the theoretical model developed for the hypothesis must first be evaluated to determine the extent to which the collected data support the proposed theoretical model. To answer this question, quantitative model fit indices are used. If the overall fit indices are acceptable, or in other words, if the theoretical model is confirmed, then the relationships within the model can be examined. These interrelationships include the regression coefficients (effect coefficients) related to the

hypotheses and the factor loadings related to each item. To test the acceptability of these coefficients (effect coefficients and factor loadings), the partial p-value index is used, and for acceptable values, this index must be less than .05. Table

3 presents the model fit indices along with their desirable values.

Table 3

Fit Indices of the Revised Model

Fit Category	Fit Index	Value	Criterion	Interpretation
Absolute	Chi-square (χ^2)	178.40	—	—
	Degrees of freedom (df)	88	—	—
	Significance level	.001	Less than .05	
	Relative chi-square (χ^2/df)	178.40 / 88	Less than 3	Good fit
	Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	.911	Greater than .90	Good fit
Comparative	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	.867	Greater than .85	Good fit
	Relative Fit Index (RFI)	.935	Greater than .90	Good fit
	Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.923	Greater than .90	Good fit
	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.921	Greater than .90	Good fit
	Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	.923	Greater than .90	Good fit
	Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.916	Greater than .90	Good fit
	Parsimonious	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.043	Less than .10
Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI)		.666	Greater than .50	Good fit
Parsimonious Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI)		.672	Greater than .50	Good fit

Figure 1

Standardized coefficients of the revised proposed model: attitudes toward marital infidelity based on thinking styles and mindfulness with the mediating role of emotional attachment.

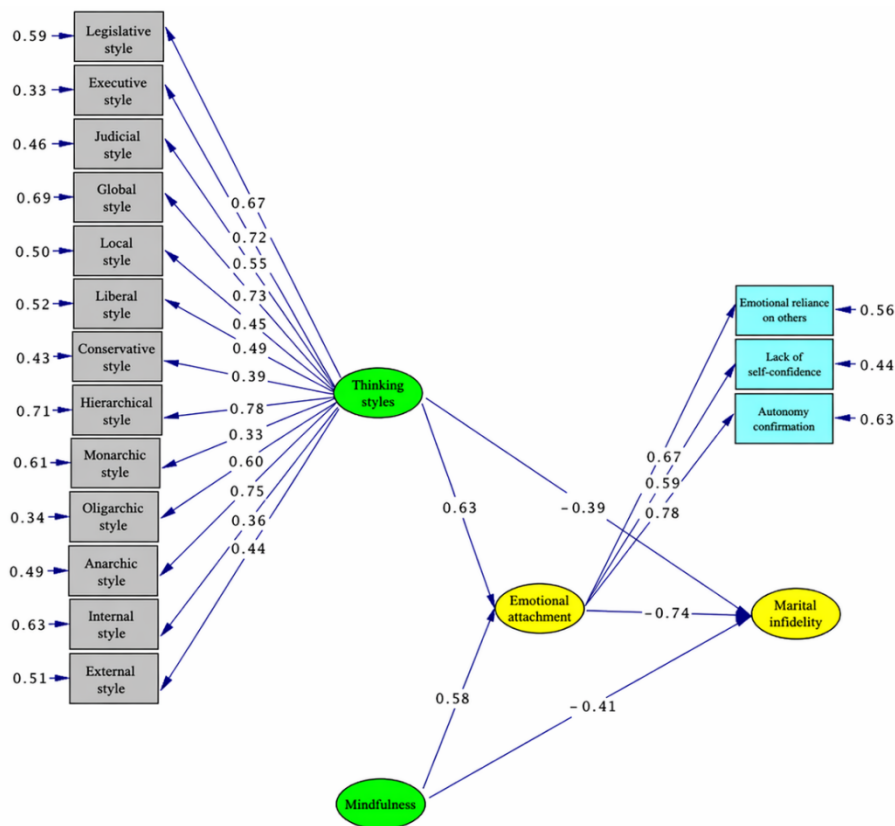
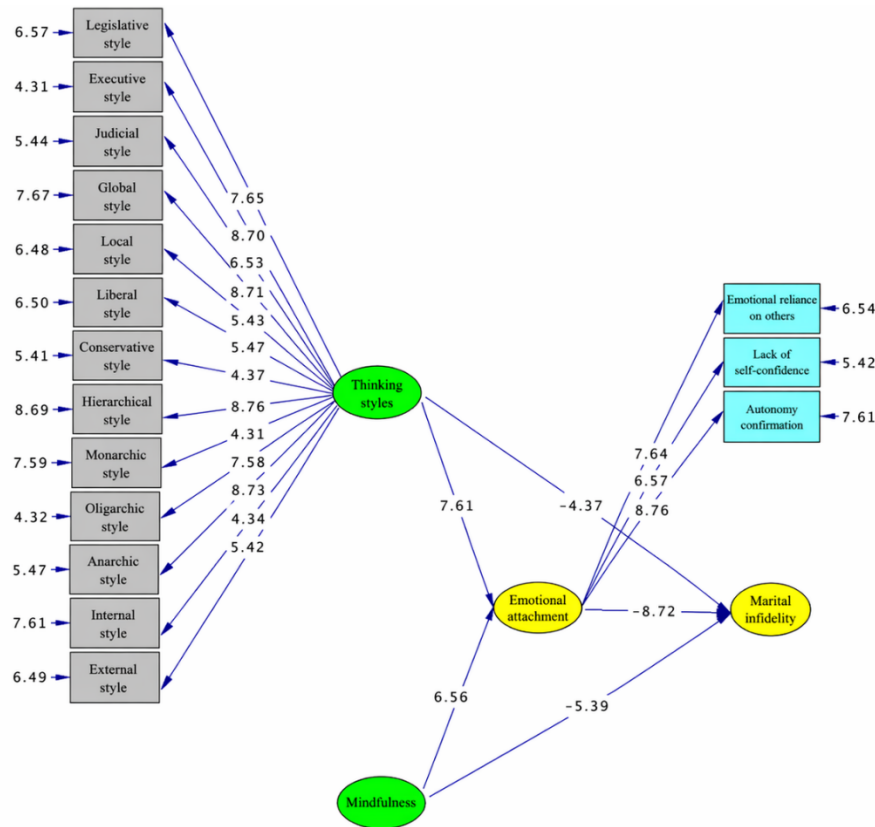


Figure 2

Significance statistics (*t*-values) for attitudes toward marital infidelity based on thinking styles and mindfulness with the mediating role of emotional attachment.



The results in the above table show that the χ^2 statistic was 178.40 with 88 degrees of freedom. The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (2.027) was less than 3, indicating an excellent model fit. The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) was .911, indicating a desirable fit of the model. The Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) was .867, which is greater than .85; therefore, the model had an acceptable fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was .043, and given that it was less than .10, it was considered desirable and indicated confirmation of the research model. The Bentler–Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) was .916, the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) was .923, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .921, and the Relative Fit Index (RFI) was .935, all of which indicate desirable fit and confirmation of the research model.

Based on the above results and the quantitative fit indices, it can be concluded that the theoretical model of the study is acceptable. Therefore, the relationships within the model and the regression coefficients between the latent variables can now be examined. To test the hypotheses, the partial p-value index was used, and the condition for the significance of a relationship was that this index should be less than .05 for the relationship under investigation. Therefore, the first research hypothesis, stating that the model predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity based on thinking styles and mindfulness with the mediating role of emotional attachment has adequate fit, was confirmed. Table 4 presents the direct effect coefficients and significance levels among the research variables.

Table 4*Estimates of the Direct Effects of the Independent Variables on the Dependent Variable*

Path	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	Significance Level
Thinking styles → Attitudes toward marital infidelity	-0.391	0.265	-4.37	0.0005
Mindfulness → Attitudes toward marital infidelity	-0.412	0.327	-5.39	0.0005
Thinking styles → Emotional attachment	0.637	0.344	7.61	0.0005
Mindfulness → Emotional attachment	0.586	0.310	6.56	0.0005
Emotional attachment → Attitudes toward marital infidelity	-0.745	0.314	-8.72	0.0005

4. Discussion

The findings of the present study demonstrated that the proposed structural model predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity based on thinking styles and mindfulness, with the mediating role of emotional attachment, exhibited an acceptable and desirable fit. This result indicates that the conceptual framework of the study is empirically supported and that the selected variables collectively provide a coherent explanation of variations in attitudes toward marital infidelity. Such findings are consistent with prior structural models that have emphasized the multifactorial nature of marital infidelity, highlighting the simultaneous contribution of cognitive, emotional, and relational factors (Khazraloo et al., 2026; Mosharrafi et al., 2025). The adequacy of model fit indices further reinforces the robustness of integrating these constructs within a unified explanatory model.

The results also revealed that thinking styles had a significant negative direct effect on attitudes toward marital infidelity. This finding suggests that individuals who possess more adaptive and organized thinking styles are less likely to hold permissive attitudes toward infidelity. This result aligns with previous studies indicating that thinking styles influence interpersonal judgments, decision-making processes, and behavioral tendencies in close relationships (Dennin et al., 2022; Feng & Lee, 2010). Moreover, research has shown that maladaptive cognitive patterns and dysfunctional beliefs are associated with emotional divorce and relationship instability, which can increase vulnerability to infidelity (Zaker et al., 2023). Similarly, Zarifi (2024) reported that constructive thinking styles are positively associated with marital satisfaction and effective problem-solving, thereby reducing the likelihood of engaging in or accepting infidelity (Zarifi & Eghbal, 2024). From a theoretical perspective, thinking styles shape how individuals interpret relational conflicts and evaluate moral boundaries, thereby influencing their attitudes toward extramarital relationships.

In addition, mindfulness was found to have a significant negative direct effect on attitudes toward marital infidelity. This finding indicates that individuals with higher levels of mindfulness are less likely to endorse or justify infidelity. This result is consistent with theoretical and empirical literature emphasizing the role of mindfulness in enhancing emotional regulation, reducing impulsivity, and promoting adaptive interpersonal behaviors (Channawar, 2023; Simone & Saldarini, 2023). Mindfulness enables individuals to become more aware of their thoughts and emotions without judgment, thereby reducing automatic and potentially harmful responses in relational contexts. Empirical evidence suggests that mindfulness is associated with improved conflict resolution strategies and greater relationship satisfaction (Mandal & Lip, 2022). Furthermore, mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to enhance emotion regulation capacities, which are critical for maintaining stable and satisfying relationships (Hedayati Zafarghandi et al., 2021). The negative association between mindfulness and attitudes toward infidelity can also be interpreted within the framework of stress regulation theories, where mindfulness promotes adaptive coping mechanisms and reduces the likelihood of maladaptive relational behaviors (Cohen & Lansing, 2022).

Another important finding of the study was the significant positive relationship between thinking styles and emotional attachment, as well as between mindfulness and emotional attachment. These results suggest that both cognitive and attentional processes contribute to the formation and quality of emotional bonds in relationships. Individuals with adaptive thinking styles are more likely to develop coherent and stable relational schemas, which facilitate secure attachment patterns (Alaybek et al., 2021). Similarly, mindfulness enhances emotional awareness and empathy, which are essential components of secure attachment (Soumya & Sathiyaseelan, 2021). These findings are consistent with prior research indicating that mindfulness plays a mediating role in the relationship between attachment styles and various psychological outcomes

(Ghasemzadeh et al., 2026). Additionally, attachment theory posits that early cognitive and emotional experiences shape individuals' expectations and behaviors in adult relationships, thereby influencing their susceptibility to relational disruptions such as infidelity (Fonagy et al., 2023; Khadka, 2022).

The results further indicated that emotional attachment had a significant negative effect on attitudes toward marital infidelity. This finding implies that individuals with stronger and more secure emotional attachment are less likely to hold favorable attitudes toward infidelity. This result is in line with previous studies demonstrating that attachment security is associated with higher levels of trust, commitment, and relational satisfaction, all of which act as protective factors against infidelity (Kaba & Gungor, 2024; Richardson et al., 2023). Conversely, insecure attachment patterns, such as anxious or avoidant styles, are linked to emotional dissatisfaction and increased likelihood of seeking alternative relationships (Safir & Ahmadi, 2026). Moreover, research has shown that interpersonal dependency and emotional reliance on others are closely related to relational stability and satisfaction, further supporting the importance of attachment processes in marital relationships (Hosseini Ardakani, 2020). These findings underscore the central role of emotional attachment as a key determinant of attitudes toward marital fidelity.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the present study is the confirmation of the mediating role of emotional attachment in the relationships between thinking styles and mindfulness with attitudes toward marital infidelity. This finding suggests that the influence of cognitive and attentional processes on attitudes toward infidelity operates, at least in part, through their impact on emotional attachment. In other words, adaptive thinking styles and higher levels of mindfulness contribute to the development of secure emotional attachment, which in turn reduces permissive attitudes toward infidelity. This mediating mechanism is consistent with integrative models of psychological functioning that emphasize the interplay between cognition, emotion, and interpersonal relationships (Gross, 2015). It also aligns with empirical studies highlighting the mediating role of attachment and emotional variables in predicting relational outcomes (Barkhordari & Shahbazi, 2023; Mosharrafati et al., 2025). Furthermore, the findings are supported by research indicating that attitudes toward marriage and emotional maturity significantly influence marital stability and vulnerability to infidelity (Gholami Gharahsheran et al., 2022).

5. Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive model that integrates cognitive, emotional, and relational factors in predicting attitudes toward marital infidelity. The results highlight the importance of considering multiple psychological dimensions simultaneously rather than focusing on isolated variables. This integrative approach is particularly valuable in the context of modern societies, where changing social norms and increasing relational complexities necessitate a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms of marital dynamics (Lashkari & Ghaderi, 2026). Additionally, the findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of personality, attachment, and cognitive processes in shaping attitudes toward extramarital relationships (Ahmadi Dahmand & Zarei Tupkhaneh, 2022; Rahnama et al., 2023).

6. Limitations and Suggestions

The limitations of the present study should be acknowledged. First, the use of a convenience sampling method limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Second, the reliance on self-report questionnaires may introduce response biases, including social desirability and recall bias. Third, the cross-sectional design of the study does not allow for causal inferences, and longitudinal studies are needed to examine the stability of these relationships over time. Fourth, the study focused exclusively on women, which restricts the applicability of the findings to men or mixed-gender populations. Finally, cultural factors specific to the study context may influence the observed relationships, and caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to other cultural settings.

Future research should address these limitations by employing longitudinal and experimental designs to better understand causal relationships among the variables. Researchers are encouraged to include more diverse and representative samples, including both men and women from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, future studies could explore other potential mediators and moderators, such as personality traits, communication patterns, and cultural values, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing attitudes toward marital infidelity. The use of mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative and qualitative data, may also offer deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms of these relationships.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study have important implications for counseling and intervention programs aimed at promoting marital stability. Practitioners can design interventions that focus on enhancing adaptive thinking styles, improving mindfulness skills, and strengthening emotional attachment among couples. Educational programs that promote awareness of cognitive and emotional processes in relationships may help individuals develop healthier attitudes toward marital commitment. Furthermore, incorporating mindfulness-based and attachment-based approaches into therapeutic practices can contribute to reducing the risk of infidelity and improving overall relationship quality. These strategies can be particularly beneficial in counseling settings, where addressing both cognitive and emotional aspects of relationships is essential for achieving sustainable outcomes.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. This article is derived from the first author's master's thesis conducted at

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